

UPLAND GAME BIRD ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

REPORT TO THE 66th MONTANA LEGISLATURE

January 2019



Pheasants Forever Coffee Creek Conservation Easement, Denton. Photo courtesy of Craig Roberts.



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	2
LIST OF FIGURES.....	2
OVERVIEW.....	4
INTRODUCTION.....	4
PROGRAM MILESTONES	5
Building Capacity.....	5
Program Expansion	6
UGBEP Database	9
Conservation Lease Agreement.....	10
Regional Food Plot Mix (Pilot)	10
Citizens’ Advisory Council	10
BIENNIAL REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES	11
Beginning Balances and Expended Funds.....	11
BIENNIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS.....	13
Habitat Project Accomplishments and Status	13
Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters (VPA HIP Grant)	29
Cooperative Conservation Positions.....	32
Region 1 Lake County-based Farming (FWP/USFWS/HF/PF Partnership)	32
Region 4 Denton-based Farming (FWP/HF/PF Partnership)	34
Region 5 Billings-based Farming (FWP/HF/BLM Partnership)	37
Western Forests Cooperative Biologist	39
Upland Game Bird Release Program	41
Pen-reared Pheasant Releases	41
Wild Turkey Transplants	42
Supplemental Feeding.....	42
UGBEP Projects Access Guide.....	42
PROGRAM EVALUATION AND ONGOING ADAPTATION.....	45
Contract/Project Monitoring	45
UGBEP Citizens’ Advisory Council	45
UGBEP Hunter Survey	46

Open Fields Hunter Survey	47
FY 2019 PROGRAM EMPHASIS.....	48
Program Revenue and Expenditures	48
Program Adjustments	48
Wildlife Friendly Practices (Pilot).....	48
Cooperative Farming Contracts	49
Western Forest Management Contract.....	49
APPENDIX A: MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS UPLAND BIRD 10-YEAR LICENSE SALES	50

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Organizations and government agencies who are conservation partners with the UGBEP in each of the seven FWP regions.....	8
Table 2. UGBEP Council members—Current as of 11/1/2018.....	11
Table 3. UGBEP biennial revenue and spending.....	12
Table 4. Non-license funds that contributed to the UGBEP.	12
Table 5. UGBEP habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.	14
Table 6. Summary of the number of active UGBEP projects, as reported from past UGBEP reports.....	27
Table 7. Summary of landowner enrollment in VPA HIP Open Fields between FY 2014 and FY 2018.	30
Table 8. Selection of habitat enhancement and maintenance activities: Lake County.	33
Table 9. Summary of habitat enhancement and maintenance activities: Denton.....	36
Table 10. Highlights of Habitat Forever enhancement and maintenance activities: Billings.	38
Table 11. Summary of pheasant release contracts awarded.	42
Table 12. Total number of guides requested by year through the program’s web page (HQ)... ..	45

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. New UGBEP enrollments in 2015 biennium and the 2017 biennium.....	6
Figure 2. Map showing active UGBEP projects.....	28
Figure 3. Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters program sign.....	30
Figure 4. Pheasant Forever members enjoy a great hunt on an Open Fields project site.	31
Figure 5. A hunter reported difficulty keeping track of his dogs in this Triticale food plot but bagged a rooster nonetheless. (Sandmark WPA, Lake County).....	33
Figure 6. Mature winter cover with adjacent food sources are effective enhancements to help pheasants get through tough winters and cold wet springs. Pictured here is Seaberry (<i>Hippophae</i> spp), which provides security cover and food source for upland game birds and other wildlife (PF Coffee Creek).....	35

Figure 7. Sorghum provides excellent winter cover and food for pheasants and other wildlife (Yellowstone WMA).	39
Figure 8. Published annually, the Projects Access Guide provides hunters with information such as project location, project type, and method used to obtain landowner’s permission to hunt.	43
Figure 9. This example of a PDF Map Page provides hunters with key information on project access.	44

The Goal of the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program is to efficiently and responsibly conserve and enhance upland game bird habitats and populations—providing quality public hunting opportunities for upland game birds for present and future generations.

OVERVIEW

Montana is fortunate to have a program dedicated to upland game bird habitats and hunting access opportunities. The Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program (UGBEP) advances game bird conservation, providing the means for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and its partners to work directly with interested landowners and conservation partners to achieve abundant game bird populations. As changes in land uses intensify and hunting access becomes more difficult to attain, the value of the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program (UGBEP) appreciates.

This biennial report chronicles program achievements, summarizes revenue and expenditures, and tabulates habitat enhancement projects and upland game bird releases conducted in FY 2017 and FY 2018. This report is intended for Montana legislators, the UGBEP Citizens' Advisory Council, FWP staff, and interested organizations and citizens.

INTRODUCTION

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks administers the statewide Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program, which is organized into two parts:

1. Upland Game Bird Habitat Enhancement Program (Montana ARM 12.9.7)
2. Upland Game Bird Release Program (Montana ARM 12.9.6)

The principle outcomes of the UGBEP are:

- establishment or enhancement of game bird habitats that benefit gray partridge, forest grouse, ring-necked pheasants, sage-grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, and wild turkey;
- conservation of valuable game bird habitats;
- enhanced public game bird hunting opportunities;
- release of pen-reared pheasants into suitable habitats to establish or enhance populations; and
- wild turkey transplants in suitable areas generally void of turkeys.

A portion of the funds received from the sale of each upland game bird hunting license must be used by the department for the exclusive purpose to preserve and enhance upland game bird populations in Montana (87-1-246 through 87-1-249, MCA). Residential license sales for upland game bird and combination sports licenses contribute \$2 per license to the program. Non-resident licenses for upland game bird and big game combination contribute \$23 per license sold. Since 2013, sales of nonresident 3-day bird licenses contributed \$10 per license to the UGBEP, but sales will terminate effective July 1, 2019 unless the statute authorizing this license is reauthorized. (See Appendix A: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Upland Bird 10-year License Sales spreadsheet).

Program implementation is focused and strategic, guided by the long-term UGBEP Strategic Plan (adopted by the Fish & Wildlife Commission in 2011). The program is delivered statewide on projects located on private or public lands and spans collaborative efforts with private landowners, government agencies, and conservation partners.

PROGRAM MILESTONES

The UGBEP continues to grow and evolve in ways that increases efficiency and participation. In the past biennium, the following program milestones were noteworthy:

Building Capacity

Over the past 5 years, the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program has increased capacity, allowing FWP to work more effectively with ranchers, farmers, and public land agencies who have a strong desire to manage or improve wildlife habitat. Habitat enhancements are complementary to agricultural operations.

In previous years, program enrollment had been steady, but the unspent balance of program funding continued to grow. The program experienced expanded interest and participation during the past biennium. The principle drivers for increased program accomplishments are three UGBEP habitat specialists who have established a broad network of landowner participants, continued work by FWP area biologists, and expanded work by conservation partners including Pheasants Forever, Habitat Forever, and The National Wild Turkey Federation. This work includes building relationships and working with landowners on designing, contracting, and implementing habitat enhancement and conservation projects that support game birds and improve public game bird hunting experiences.

Since early 2015, Jake Doggett, Region 4 UGBEP Habitat Specialist, and Ken Plourde, Region 6 UGBEP Habitat Specialist have been serving as program leads in their respective regions. In early 2017, Justin Hughes joined the team as the new UGBEP Habitat Specialist in Region 7.

Figure 1 shows the increase in program enrollment between the 2015 biennium and this past biennium. Habitat enhancement contracts increased nearly 147%, from 65 contracts to 161 contracts. There were slow enrollment periods during the first half of FY 2015, due in part to vacant Habitat Specialist positions. Since filling these positions, both the project acres and access acres more than doubled, increasing 240% and 135%, respectively.

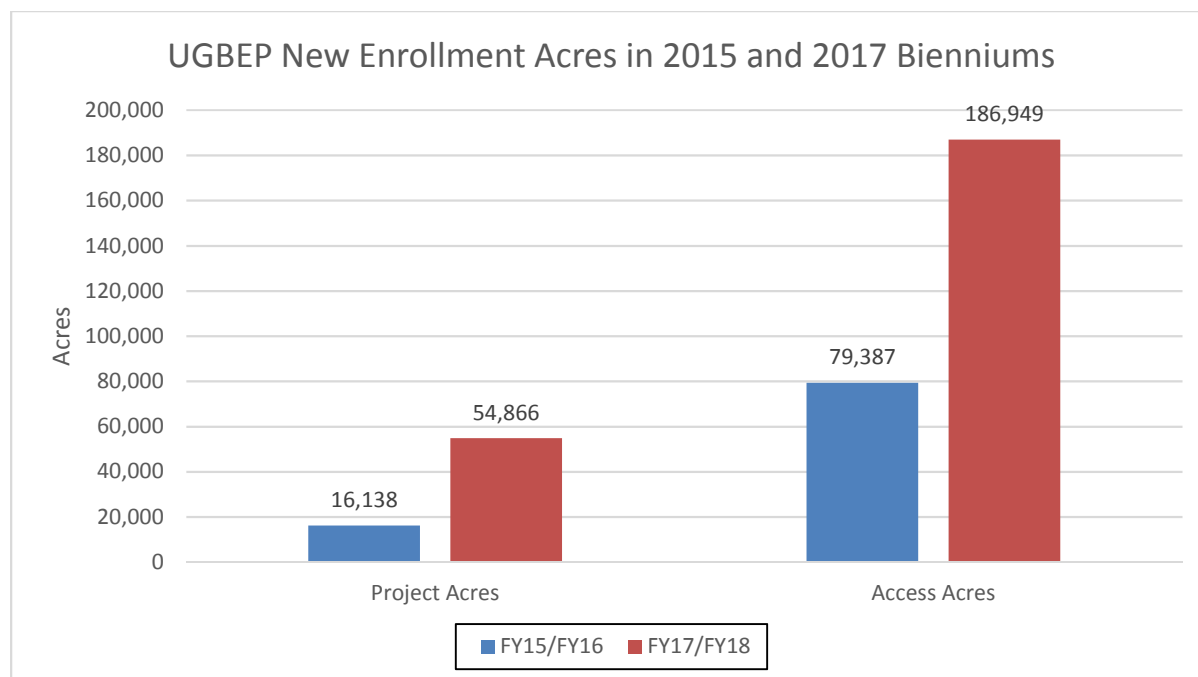


Figure 1. New UGBEP enrollments in 2015 biennium and the 2017 biennium.

Program Expansion

Leveraging program dollars with other conservation organization funds has expanded program accomplishments into parts of Montana where the program historically has had a relatively small presence.

- In western Montana, forest resource managers are faced with reduced budgets and limited staff capacity, which often limit the timely implementation of beneficial forest management practices. A National Wild Turkey Federation Cooperative Wildlife Biologist position, funded by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and FWP, was filled November 2015 (FY 2016) by Dave Nikonow. His primary focus is to deliver sound beneficial forest management practices that improve wildlife habitat, primarily for

forest grouse and wild turkey, on national forest lands in the greater Missoula, Kalispell, and Helena areas. Through Dave's efforts, UGBEP projects have been established in Missoula, Lake, and Powell counties. More details on accomplishments associated with this position can be found in the section entitled, **Western Forests Cooperative Biologist**.

- Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters (Open Fields) made its debut in FY 2011 and was designed to incentivize landowners to keep some land in CRP while allowing walk-in game bird hunting access with no further permission. Open Fields enrollment continued to expand, especially during federal general CRP sign-up periods. During this last biennium, the enrollment area for Open Fields expanded to include some southern Montana counties. Details about Open Fields are found on Page 29.
- In FY 2016, three Pheasants Forever, Inc. (PF) Farm Bill Biologist positions were established through a partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The Farm Bill Biologist positions are stationed in NRCS Field Offices located in Conrad, Chinook, and Scobey. Their primary purpose is to promote Farm Bill conservation programs with an emphasis on the Conservation Reserve Program. Because of the overlapping conservation interest and the opportunity to provide landowner outreach for the UGBEP, FWP also contributed UGBEP funds toward these positions through a contract with PF. During FY 2017, the NRCS and PF established an additional Farm Bill Biologist position in Bozeman and hired new staff to fill previously vacated positions. In January 2018, FWP program managers met with the newly-hired Farm Bill Biologists to coordinate working with FWP regional staff and to provide details on UGBEP and other FWP habitat programs.

The Farm Bill Biologists have been instrumental with providing UGBEP information to agricultural producers. Through their outreach, several landowners contacted the UGBEP Habitat Specialists for more information and several Open Fields contracts were completed. Additional outreach accomplished during the biennium:

- The Farm Bill Biologists conducted a series of 9 "Expiring CRP" workshops for area producers in various parts of Montana. The UGBEP Habitat Specialists and FWP biologists provided wildlife program overviews at these workshops.
- Working together, the Habitat Specialists and Farm Bill Biologists sent a mailing to landowners enrolled in the FWP Block Management program. The purpose of this outreach was to promote program options, such as UGBEP Habitat Management Leases, on expired CRP.

The importance of conservation partnerships cannot be overstated. A diversity of partnerships has been essential to implementing the UGBEP (Table 1).

Table 1. Organizations and government agencies who are conservation partners with the UGBEP in each of the seven FWP regions.

Region 1	Region 2
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Five Valleys Chapter of Pheasants Forever Habitat Forever Mission Valley Chapter of Pheasants Forever US Fish Wildlife Service	Blackfoot Community Conservation Area National Wild Turkey Federation US Forest Service
Region 3	
Beaverhead Chapter of Pheasants Forever Bureau of Land Management, Butte Field Office Gallatin Valley Chapter of Pheasants Forever	Headwaters Chapter of Pheasants Forever Lazy Game Birds NRCS Field Office, Beaverhead County US Fish Wildlife Service – Arctic Grayling Program
Region 4	
Bureau of Land Management, Havre Field Office Central Montana Chapter of Pheasants Forever DNRC State Lands, Conrad Unit Ducks Unlimited Farm Service Agency, Cascade County Farm Service Agency, Chouteau County Farm Service Agency, Glacier County Farm Service Agency, Pondera County Farm Service Agency, Teton County Farm Service Agency, Toole County Habitat Forever, Denton Headwaters Chapter of Pheasants Forever Montana Salinity Control Association Nebraska Game and Parks Commission	NRCS Field Office, Cascade County NRCS Field Office, Chouteau County NRCS Field Office, Glacier County NRCS Field Office, Pondera County NRCS Field Office, Teton County NRCS Field Office, Toole County Rimrock Valley Preserve, LLC Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologists Pondera County Conservation District Upper Missouri Chapter of Pheasants Forever USFWS Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge USFWS Benton Lake Wetland Management District USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Region 5	
Billings Rod & Gun Club Bureau of Land Management, Billings Field Office Conoco Phillips-Phillips 66 Habitat Forever, Billings	National Wild Turkey Federation Montana Chapter of Safari Club Yellowstone Valley Chapter of Pheasants Forever
Region 6	
Daniels County Conservation District DNRC State Lands, Glasgow Unit Ducks Unlimited Farm Service Agency, Blaine County Farm Service Agency, Daniels County Farm Service Agency, Hill County Farm Service Agency, McCone County Farm Service Agency, Phillips County Farm Service Agency, Richland County Farm Service Agency, Roosevelt County Farm Service Agency, Sheridan County Farm Service Agency, Valley County National Fish and Wildlife Foundation National Wild Turkey Federation Northeast Montana Chapter of Pheasants Forever NRCS Field Office, Blaine County NRCS Field Office, Daniels County	NRCS Field Office, Hill County NRCS Field Office, Phillips County NRCS Field Office, Richland County NRCS Field Office, Roosevelt County NRCS Field Office, Sheridan County NRCS Field Office, Valley County Northeast Chapter of Pheasants Forever Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologists Phillips County Conservation District Roosevelt County Conservation District Sheridan County Conservation District Sorenson Pheasant Farm The Nature Conservancy USFWS Bowdoin National Wildlife Refuge USFWS Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
Region 7	
American Bird Conservancy Bureau of Land Management, Miles City Office Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Rosebud County Farm Service Agency, Dawson County Farm Service Agency, McCone County	NRCS Field Office, Baker County NRCS Field Office, Carter County NRCS Field Office, Custer County NRCS Field Office, McCone County NRCS Field Office, Richland County

UGBEP Database

Program staff have been working with FWP Technology Services since FY 2017 to upgrade the UGBEP contracts database for improved efficiencies, accountability, and to maintain data integrity. As envisioned, the new version will allow all program staff to interact with the database by (1) entering proposal information for review and endorsement; (2) establishing contracts and payment vouchers; (3) applying electronic signatures on specific forms; and (4)

generating annual reports. Unfortunately, several Technology Services positions—personnel working on this database and others—became vacant and unfilled during the biennium; approximately 70% of the improvements have been completed. Work will continue on the database as fitting with other agency priorities.

Conservation Lease Agreement

Montana FWP enrolled its first 30-year conservation lease agreement using the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) grant award, and UGBEP provided 31 percent match. The purpose of this lease is to conserve and enhance native perennial vegetation and productive wetlands on private property while continuing to function as working ranchlands. The landowner also agreed to a minimum of 336 hunter-days annually.

Regional Food Plot Mix (Pilot)

The three Habitat Specialists developed species lists for their respective regions to improve food plots for upland game birds. The seed mixes were customized to the soil types and climate differences. The seed mixes contain a diversity of grains, grasses, and forbs that provide productive cover in addition to food benefits. This effort to develop these seed mixes began in FY 2017 and has continued to be revised based on experience and input from producers and other partners.

Citizens' Advisory Council

Since FY 2010, the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program Citizens' Advisory Council (Council), consisting of 12 members appointed by the director (87-1-251, MCA), has been providing program oversight. Membership includes two legislators, one from each party and in each house, a local chamber of commerce representative, upland game bird hunters, conservationists, an upland game bird biologist, and landowners. The council and department meet twice each year, once in the spring to make recommendations on proposed work plans for the upcoming field season and later in the fall to review program accomplishments and to tour a sampling of projects. All council meetings are open to the public, who are invited to provide feedback to the department and the council.

Several Council member rotations occurred since the beginning of FY 2016. Representative Rob Cook joined the Council, filling one of two required legislator positions. Rep. Cook will be going off of the Council as his term with the legislature ends. Josh Schrecengost, NRCS Biologist in Great Falls, began in May 2017, filling the membership requirement for an upland game bird biologist. Darlyn Dascher, a landowner near Fort Peck, also began serving on the Council. Current Council membership positions—filled and vacant—are noted in Table 2.

FWP expresses its sincere thanks to all Council members—past and present—who have shown tremendous dedication to the program. Through their dedication and contribution, the Council has been one of the driving forces, advancing the program to where it is today.

Table 2. UGBEP Council members—Current as of 11/1/2018.

Region	Name	Primary Representation (87-1-251, MCA)
2	Bill McChesney, Stevensville	Conservationist
3	Dustin Ramoie, East Helena	Upland Game Bird Hunter
4	Josh Schrecengost, Great Falls	Upland Game Bird Biologist
5	Dr. Charlie Noland, Chairman, Worden	Landowner in Block Management
6	Darlyn Dascher, Ft. Peck	Landowner
6	Trent Kleppen, Plentywood	Upland Game Bird Hunter
7	Doug Bonsell, Ekalaka	Conservationist
<i>Vacancies</i>		
1	Vacant	Regional Representation
Any	Vacant	Chamber of Commerce Representative
Any	Vacant	Democrat
Any	Vacant	Republican
Any	Vacant	At Large

BIENNIAL REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

Beginning Balances and Expended Funds

Table 3 reports the beginning balances for FY 2017 and FY 2018 and revenue income and expenditures for UGBEP. Administrative expenditures include all costs attributable to the overall operation and implementation of the program, including personnel and operations costs of the UGBEP coordinator, a portion of the 3 UGBEP habitat specialists' positions, and the annual Projects Access Guide. Administrative costs also included \$25,122 for the Council meetings, which met 4 times during the biennium. Council expenditures included daily honorariums, mileage and lodging costs, per-diem allowances, and meeting expenses.

Table 4 provides information for non-license funds. The program expended a total of \$402,070 from a USDA Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) grant to fund Open Fields projects during the biennium. The 3 habitat specialists were also funded by Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid dollars.

The program expended \$115,704 and \$45,992 on pen-reared pheasant releases in FY 2017 and FY 2018, respectively (Table 3). The drop in expenditures between fiscal years was attributable to several factors. In FY 2017, Region 7 had a pheasant producer who actively encouraged

program participation that generated a historic number of pheasant releases for that part of the state. The pheasant producer moved away in FY 2018, and landowners did not seek to reapply for program enrollment. Revised rules for pheasant releases also limited landowner participation to 5 consecutive years, with the expectation that 5 years will allow pheasants to establish in an area based on the amount of suitable habitat. If a landowner enhances their property cover, specifically habitat cover that was limiting, they may be eligible for another 5-year pheasant release cycle funded through the program.

Table 3. UGBEP biennial revenue and spending.

FY 2017							
UGBEP FUNDING (\$)			FY 2017 EXPENDITURES (\$)				BALANCE SUMMARY (\$)
FY 2017 Beginning Balance	License Revenue	Total Funds	Bird Planting	Habitat Enhancement	Admin ¹	Total Expenditures	FY 2017 Year End Balance
3,424,234	774,625	4,198,859	115,704	573,892	252,479	942,076	3,256,783
	¹ Includes overhead.						
	FY 2018						
UGBEP FUNDING (\$)			FY 2016 EXPENDITURES (\$)				BALANCE SUMMARY (\$)
FY 2018 Beginning Balance	License Revenue	Total Funds	Bird Planting	Habitat Enhancement	Admin ¹	Total Expenditures	FY 2018 Year End Balance
3,256,783	715,971	3,972,754	45,922	852,717	310,769	1,209,408	2,763,346
	¹ Includes overhead.						

87-1-246 and 87-1-247, MCA

Table 4. Non-license funds that contributed to the UGBEP.

	FY 2017			FY 2018		
Source	Habitat Enhancement	Admin	Total 2017 Expenditures	Habitat Enhancement	Admin	Total 2018 Expenditures
Pittman-Robertson	NA	\$138,939	\$138,939	NA	\$141,553	\$141,553
VPA-HIP	\$62,360	NA	\$62,360	\$339,710	NA	\$339,710
General License	NA	\$7,079	\$7,079	NA	\$16,609	\$16,609
TOTALS	\$62,360	\$146,243	\$208,602	\$339,710	\$158,162	\$497,872

BIENNIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Habitat Project Accomplishments and Status

The UGBEP funds habitat enhancements and conservation through partnerships with landowners, organizations, state, and federal government agencies. During the biennium, the UGBEP enrolled 161 new projects, enhancing and conserving 54,865 acres of upland game bird habitats (Table 5). Types of project included aspen regeneration efforts; establishment of nesting cover, shelterbelts, grazing management, and food plots; retention of CRP-enrolled lands through Open Fields and CRP seed cost-shares; and short-term and long-term leases. As a result of these projects, over 171,166 acres of land were available for free public upland game bird hunting.

Total new habitat project costs for the biennium was \$2,474,335 (Table 5). The UGBEP obligated \$1,280,660 or 52% of total project costs. Obligated funds are defined as the program's commitment of funds towards a specific project and identified in an executed contract. Obligated funds are not expenditures. Conversely, expended funds are the actual program expenditures as reported in Tables 3 and 4. All UGBEP obligated costs are tracked by the program coordinator for the purposes of budgeting.

With the exception of Habitat Management leases and some Open Fields projects, nearly all UGBEP contracts received outside funding or in-kind contributions. Cooperators contributed over \$599,000 (24%) of the shared costs, usually as in-kind contributions. The remaining contributions, approximately \$597,000 (24%), were derived from other agency programs and organizations, including USDA Farm Bill programs, Volunteer Public Access Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP), Pheasants Forever chapters, BLM, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, or other FWP habitat programs.

Table 5. UGBEP habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.

Project Type	Region	County	Project Effective Date	Project Acres	Acres Open to Access	Obligated Costs (\$)			
						UGBEP	Cooperator	Other Partners	Project Total
Aspen Regen. (USFS)	2	Missoula	05/23/18	1,250	>1,250	12,000	63,000	-	75,000
Aspen Regen. (USFS)	2	Missoula	05/23/18	377	>377	9,000	50,000	-	59,000
Aspen Regen. (USFS)	2	Powell	07/07/16	30	>30	6,500	7,000	-	13,500
Aspen Regen. (USFS)	5	Fergus	05/30/18	167	>167	3,000	42,801	5,000	50,801
Conservation Lease Agreement	6	Phillips	06/01/17	10,382	10,382	96,670	98,000	116,802	311,472
CRP Seed Cost-share	6	Daniels	09/01/16	438	438	13,140	6,570	19,710	39,420
CRP Seed Cost-share	6	Daniels	09/01/16	182	342	5,460	2,730	8,190	16,380
CRP Seed Cost-share	6	Daniels	09/01/16	80	240	2,400	1,200	3,600	7,200
CRP Seed Cost-share	6	Daniels	09/01/16	237	696	6,810	3,405	10,215	20,430
CRP Seed Cost-share	6	Roosevelt	10/24/17	137	160	4,220	1,085	6,751	12,056
CRP Seed Cost-share	6	Sheridan	09/01/16	49	1,549	1,470	735	2,205	4,410
CRP Seed Cost-share	6	Sheridan	09/01/16	122	571	3,810	1,905	5,715	11,430
Grazing Management	6	Richland	02/01/17	3,646	2,924	57,061	22,436	0	79,497

Table 5—continued. UGBEP habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.

Project Type	Region	County	Project Effective Date	Project Acres	Acres Open to Access	Obligated Costs (\$)			
						UGBEP	Cooperator	Other Partners	Project Total
Grazing Management	7	Richland	07/20/16	12,145	13,965	179,565	179,565	10,000	369,130
Habitat Mgt Lease	4	Cascade	08/23/17	231	682	31,771	1,125	0	32,896
Habitat Mgt Lease	4	Chouteau	08/01/17	115	440	9,339	16,560	0	25,899
Habitat Mgt Lease	4	Pondera	09/13/16	87	2,117	3,608	14,008	0	17,616
Habitat Mgt Lease	4	Toole	09/01/16	55	1,269	3,347	8,856	0	12,202
Habitat Mgt Lease	6	Daniels	06/28/17	81	922	6,420	0	0	6,420
Habitat Mgt Lease	6	Daniels	08/01/17	53	320	3,514	0	0	3,514
Habitat Mgt Lease	6	Daniels	04/23/18	75	640	8,640	90	0	8,730
Habitat Mgt Lease	6	McCone	07/28/16	34	240	8,614	0	0	8,614
Habitat Mgt Lease	6	Sheridan	08/01/17	108	1,567	24,018	0	0	24,018
Habitat Mgt Lease	6	Sheridan	08/01/17	99	640	21,529	0	0	21,529
Habitat Mgt Lease	7	Dawson	09/01/16	86	160	5,721	0	0	5,271
Habitat Mgt Lease	7	Dawson	04/01/17	320	640	16,486	0	0	16,486

Table 5—continued. UGBEP habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.

Project Type	Region	County	Project Effective Date	Project Acres	Acres Open to Access	Obligated Costs (\$)			
						UGBEP	Cooperator	Other Partners	Project Total
Habitat Mgt Lease	7	Richland	06/27/18	160	160	31,300	0	0	31,300
Nesting Cover	4	Cascade	04/11/18	20	298	2,091	697	0	2,788
Nesting Cover	4	Cascade	04/11/18	25	850	2,614	871	0	3,485
Nesting Cover	7	Richland	08/29/16	440	960	36,190	11,150	0	47,340
Open Fields	4	Cascade	09/01/17	132	228	2,964	0	2,964	5,929
Open Fields	4	Cascade	09/01/17	246	278	4,306	0	4,306	8,611
Open Fields	4	Chouteau	09/01/16	160	279	2,400	0	2,400	4,800
Open Fields	4	Chouteau	09/01/16	160	1,230	1,200	0	1,200	2,400
Open Fields	4	Chouteau	09/01/16	157	157	2,749	0	2,749	5,498
Open Fields	4	Chouteau	09/01/16	160	270	2,400	0	2,400	4,800
Open Fields	4	Chouteau	09/01/16	160	640	1,600	0	1,600	3,200
Open Fields	4	Chouteau	09/01/16	140	146	2,096	0	2,096	4,191
Open Fields	4	Chouteau	09/01/16	113	280	1,133	0	1,133	2,266

Table 5—continued. UGBEP habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.

Project Type	Region	County	Project Effective Date	Project Acres	Acres Open to Access	Obligated Costs (\$)			
						UGBEP	Cooperator	Other Partners	Project Total
Open Fields	4	Chouteau	09/01/17	315	320	7,875	0	7,075	14,951
Open Fields	4	Chouteau	07/01/17	320	440	4,800	0	4,800	9,600
Open Fields	4	Chouteau	09/01/17	209	275	5,602	0	5,602	11,205
Open Fields	4	Chouteau	09/01/17	19	160	142	0	142	285
Open Fields	4	Fergus	09/01/17	196	312	2,449	0	2,449	4,898
Open Fields	4	Fergus	09/01/17	320	518	2,400	0	2,400	4,800
Open Fields	4	Glacier	09/01/17	282	313	2,074	0	2,074	4,148
Open Fields	4	Glacier	09/01/17	252	482	1,918	0	1,918	3,836
Open Fields	4	Glacier	09/01/17	320	480	4,800	0	4,800	9,600
Open Fields	4	Glacier	06/15/18	320	340	4,000	0	4,000	8,000
Open Fields	4	Liberty	06/15/18	320	481	2,400	0	2,400	4,800
Open Fields	4	Liberty	06/15/18	291	314	2,183	0	2,183	4,365
Open Fields	4	Pondera	09/01/16	160	2,320	1,965	0	1,965	3,929

Table 5—continued. UGBEP habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.

Project Type	Region	County	Project Effective Date	Project Acres	Acres Open to Access	Obligated Costs (\$)			
						UGBEP	Cooperator	Other Partners	Project Total
Open Fields	4	Pondera	09/01/16	153	259	3,822	0	3,822	7,645
Open Fields	4	Pondera	06/15/18	320	560	7,200	0	7,200	14,400
Open Fields	4	Pondera	06/15/18	320	738	7,200	0	7,200	14,400
Open Fields	4	Pondera	06/15/18	320	700	7,200	0	7,200	14,400
Open Fields	4	Pondera	06/15/18	320	572	7,200	0	7,200	14,400
Open Fields	4	Teton	09/01/16	7	320	217	0	181	398
Open Fields	4	Teton	09/01/16	47	257	1,172	0	1,172	2,344
Open Fields	4	Teton	09/01/17	320	479	800	0	800	1,600
Open Fields	4	Teton	09/01/17	320	459	8,000	0	8,000	16,000
Open Fields	4	Teton	06/15/18	99	160	2,219	0	2,219	4,439
Open Fields	4	Toole	09/01/16	160	165	4,800	0	4,000	8,800
Open Fields	4	Toole	09/01/17	101	160	2,267	0	2,267	4,533
Open Fields	4	Toole	09/01/17	199	292	3,988	0	3,988	7,976

Table 5—continued. UGBEP habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.

Project Type	Region	County	Project Effective Date	Project Acres	Acres Open to Access	Obligated Costs (\$)			
						UGBEP	Cooperator	Other Partners	Project Total
Open Fields	4	Toole	09/01/17	320	584	6,400	0	6,400	12,800
Open Fields	4	Toole	06/15/18	143	151	1,072	0	1,072	2,145
Open Fields	5	Stillwater	01/26/18	320	640	8,000	0	8,000	16,000
Open Fields	5	Stillwater	06/15/18	150	160	3,380	0	3,380	6,761
Open Fields	5	Wheatland	06/15/18	245	340	2,450	0	0	2,450
Open Fields	6	Blaine	09/01/16	105	105	1,575	0	1,575	3,150
Open Fields	6	Blaine	06/15/18	320	800	8,000	0	0	8,000
Open Fields	6	Chouteau	09/01/17	157	157	392	0	392	784
Open Fields	6	Daniels	09/01/16	102	152	1,530	0	1,530	3,060
Open Fields	6	Daniels	09/01/16	160	320	1,200	0	1,200	2,400
Open Fields	6	Daniels	09/01/16	160	240	1,600	0	1,600	3,200
Open Fields	6	Daniels	09/01/16	160	342	4,800	0	4,000	8,800
Open Fields	6	Daniels	09/01/16	160	240	4,800	0	4,000	8,800

Table 5—continued. UGBEP habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.

Project Type	Region	County	Project Effective Date	Project Acres	Acres Open to Access	Obligated Costs (\$)			
						UGBEP	Cooperator	Other Partners	Project Total
Open Fields	6	Daniels	09/01/16	160	469	4,800	0	4,000	8,800
Open Fields	6	Daniels	09/01/17	152	160	5,700	0	4,940	10,640
Open Fields	6	Daniels	09/01/17	320	467	12,000	0	10,400	22,400
Open Fields	6	Daniels	09/01/17	289	320	10,838	0	10,838	21,675
Open Fields	6	Daniels	09/01/17	232	382	8,700	0	7,540	16,240
Open Fields	6	Daniels	09/01/17	186	400	6,975	0	6,045	13,020
Open Fields	6	Daniels	09/01/17	58	320	2,175	0	1,885	4,060
Open Fields	6	Daniels	01/26/18	320	499	12,000	0	12,000	24,000
Open Fields	6	Daniels	07/07/17	320	721	12,000	0	12,000	24,000
Open Fields	6	Daniels	07/19/17	320	480	1,425	0	0	0
Open Fields	6	Daniels	05/29/18	283	320	21,225	0	0	21,225
Open Fields	6	Daniels	06/15/18	246	320	8,610	0	8,610	17,220
Open Fields	6	Daniels	06/15/18	78	320	1,560	0	1,560	3,120

Table 5—continued. UGBEP habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.

Project Type	Region	County	Project Effective Date	Project Acres	Acres Open to Access	Obligated Costs (\$)			
						UGBEP	Cooperator	Other Partners	Project Total
Open Fields	6	Daniels	06/15/18	320	480	7,200	0	7,200	14,400
Open Fields	6	Daniels	06/15/18	262	316	7,205	0	5,895	13,100
Open Fields	6	Hill	09/01/17	309	309	1,543	0	1,543	3,086
Open Fields	6	Hill	08/01/17	320	457	11,200	0	11,200	22,400
Open Fields	6	Hill	06/15/18	218	254	2,725	0	2,725	5,450
Open Fields	6	Hill	06/15/18	320	640	4,000	0	4,000	8,000
Open Fields	6	McCone	09/01/16	160	320	2,000	0	2,000	4,000
Open Fields	6	McCone	09/01/16	210	210	2,000	0	2,000	4,000
Open Fields	6	McCone	09/01/16	160	320	2,400	0	2,400	4,800
Open Fields	6	McCone	09/01/16	160	480	1,600	0	1,600	3,200
Open Fields	6	McCone	09/01/16	160	470	2,400	0	2,400	4,800
Open Fields	6	McCone	09/01/17	320	640	2,400	0	2,400	4,800
Open Fields	6	McCone	09/01/17	297	320	2,228	0	2,228	4,455

Table 5—continued. UGBEP habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.

Project Type	Region	County	Project Effective Date	Project Acres	Acres Open to Access	Obligated Costs (\$)			
						UGBEP	Cooperator	Other Partners	Project Total
Open Fields	6	McCone	06/15/18	43	120	430	0	0	430
Open Fields	6	Richland	09/01/16	150	160	1,875	0	1,875	3,750
Open Fields	6	Richland	09/01/16	248	261	1,600	0	1,600	3,200
Open Fields	6	Richland	09/01/16	149	149	1,490	0	1,490	2,980
Open Fields	6	Richland	09/01/17	145	320	2,175	0	2,175	4,350
Open Fields	6	Richland	09/01/17	163	166	2,038	0	2,038	4,075
Open Fields	6	Richland	09/01/17	320	640	4,800	0	4,800	9,600
Open Fields	6	Roosevelt	09/01/17	158	158	2,370	0	2,370	4,740
Open Fields	6	Roosevelt	09/01/17	285	711	2,138	0	2,138	4,275
Open Fields	6	Roosevelt	09/01/17	192	320	1,440	0	1,440	2,880
Open Fields	6	Roosevelt	06/15/18	142	160	5,680	0	4,970	10,650
Open Fields	6	Sheridan	09/01/16	160	168	4,800	0	4,000	8,800
Open Fields	6	Sheridan	09/01/17	107	160	803	0	803	1,605

Table 5—continued. UGBEP habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.

Project Type	Region	County	Project Effective Date	Project Acres	Acres Open to Access	Obligated Costs (\$)			
						UGBEP	Cooperator	Other Partners	Project Total
Open Fields	6	Sheridan	09/01/17	262	307	3,275	0	3,275	6,550
Open Fields	6	Sheridan	09/01/17	175	240	5,688	0	5,688	11,375
Open Fields	6	Sheridan	09/01/17	320	516	10,400	0	10,400	20,800
Open Fields	6	Sheridan	09/01/17	197	200	2,955	0	2,955	5,910
Open Fields	6	Sheridan	09/01/17	106	182	3,445	0	3,445	6,890
Open Fields	6	Sheridan	09/01/17	320	620	11,200	0	11,200	22,400
Open Fields	6	Sheridan	09/01/17	291	292	8,003	0	8,003	16,005
Open Fields	6	Sheridan	09/01/17	213	245	8,520	0	8,520	17,040
Open Fields	6	Sheridan	09/01/17	320	640	13,600	0	12,000	25,600
Open Fields	6	Sheridan	09/01/17	320	397	13,600	0	12,000	25,600
Open Fields	6	Sheridan	06/15/18	38	333	192	0	192	383
Open Fields	6	Sheridan	06/15/18	73	340	2,191	0	2,191	4,382
Open Fields	6	Valley	09/01/17	226	246	1,695	0	1,695	3,390

Table 5—continued. UGBEP habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.

Project Type	Region	County	Project Effective Date	Project Acres	Acres Open to Access	Obligated Costs (\$)			
						UGBEP	Cooperator	Other Partners	Project Total
Open Fields	6	Valley	09/01/17	320	640	2,400	0	2,400	4,800
Open Fields	6	Valley	09/01/17	318	320	4,770	0	4,770	9,540
Open Fields	6	Valley	09/01/17	312	312	3,900	0	3,900	7,800
Open Fields	6	Valley	07/07/17	130	155	975	0	975	1,950
Open Fields	7	Dawson	06/15/18	238	481	1,192	0	1,192	2,383
Open Fields	7	McCone	01/30/18	211	640	3,170	0	3,170	6,339
Open Fields	7	McCone	06/25/18	320	387	3,200	0	0	3,200
Open Fields	7	Wibaux	07/19/17	169	320	1,269	0	1,269	2,538
Regional Food & Cover Plot	7	Custer	06/21/18	10	1,700	4,500	500	0	5,000
Regional Food & Cover Plot	7	Custer	06/21/18	12	2,000	5,400	600	0	6,000
Regional Food & Cover Plot	7	Dawson	06/21/18	20	7,884	6,000	2,000	0	8,000
Regional Food & Cover Plot	7	Fallon	06/21/18	10	5,765	5,052	1,500	0	6,552
Regional Food & Cover Plot	7	Rosebud	06/21/18	10	9,292	1,500	500	0	2,000

Table 5—continued. UGBEP habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.

Project Type	Region	County	Project Effective Date	Project Acres	Acres Open to Access	Obligated Costs (\$)			
						UGBEP	Cooperator	Other Partners	Project Total
Shelterbelts	4	Teton	08/23/17	1	160	3,545	1,005	0	4,549
Shelterbelts	6	Sheridan	11/14/16	4	160	17,273	3,506	932	21,711
Winter Food and Cover Plots	1	Lake	05/25/17	4	427	4,929	7,545	0	12,474
Winter Food and Cover Plots	6	Daniels	07/18/16	8	3,900	3,528	1,176	0	4,704
Winter Food and Cover Plots	6	Daniels	07/25/16	2	1,120	225	75	0	300
Winter Food and Cover Plots	6	Daniels	07/07/17	2	1,000	225	75	0	300
Winter Food and Cover Plots	6	Daniels	05/01/18	6	2,000	900	0	0	900
Winter Food and Cover Plots	6	Hill	02/14/18	2	2,600	263	88	0	350
Winter Food and Cover Plots	6	Roosevelt	06/01/18	4	417	655	200	0	855
Winter Food and Cover Plots	6	Sheridan	07/20/17	7	1,215	1,050	350	0	1,400
Winter Food and Cover Plots	6	Sheridan	07/07/17	3	480	385	125	0	510
Winter Food and Cover Plots	6	Valley	03/08/17	30	2,932	45,000	15,000	0	60,000
Winter Food and Cover Plots	7	Dawson	06/27/18	50	7,884	22,500	7,500	0	30,000

Table 5—continued. UGBEP habitat enhancement projects initiated during the biennium.

Project Type	Region	County	Project Effective Date	Project Acres	Acres Open to Access	Obligated Costs (\$)			
						UGBEP	Cooperator	Other Partners	Project Total
Winter Food and Cover Plots	7	Fallon	10/13/16	20	4,471	9,000	3,000	0	12,000
Winter Food and Cover Plots	7	Fallon	09/15/17	40	4,471	30,000	10,000	0	40,000
Winter Food and Cover Plots	7	Fallon	06/27/18	40	1,720	18,000	6,000	0	24,000
Winter Food and Cover Plots	7	Richland	06/27/18	40	13,965	18,000	2,000	0	20,000
Winter Food and Cover Plots	7	Rosebud	06/27/18	50	9,292	7,500	2,500	0	10,000
SUMMARY: 161 Habitat Projects				54,865	171,166	1,280,660	599,033	596,517	2,474,335

Table 6 reflects the information for all active projects during the biennium. As of August 2018 (FY 2019), the UGBEP had 457 active contracts comprising over 486,000 project acres and over 804,000 acres available for public upland game bird hunting. The map portrays active UGBEP projects available for game bird hunting as of August 2018 (Figure 2).

Table 6. Summary of the number of active UGBEP projects, as reported from past UGBEP reports.

Biennium Report	#UGBEP Contracts (Active)	Project Acres	Access Acres
FY 2017/FY 2018	460	355,000	645,000
FY 2015/FY 2016	457	486,583	804,583
FY 2013/FY 2014	376	373,000	823,000
FY 2011/FY 2012	256	300,000	675,000
FY 2009/FY 2010	301	320,000	770,000
FY 2007/FY 2008	268	330,000	800,000

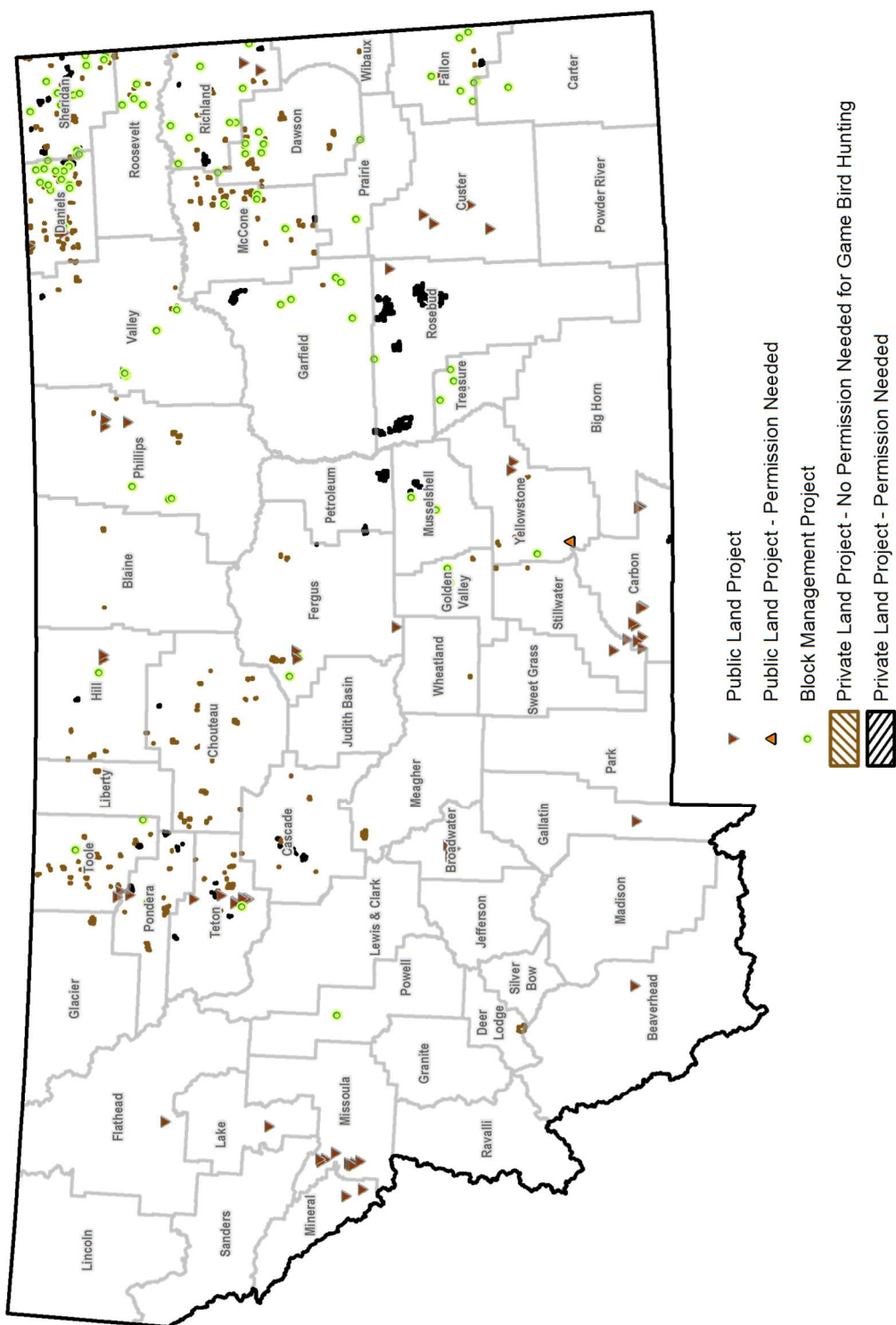


Figure 2. Map showing active UGBEP projects.

Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters (VPA HIP Grant)

In August 2014, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service awarded FWP a Volunteer Public Access Habitat Incentive Program (VPA HIP) grant of \$491,206 that was also matched with \$450,000 UGBEP funds. This grant funded a new program option for private landowners called Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters. Administered through UGBEP, Open Fields enrolls (1) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands as an incentive for keeping high quality habitats in CRP and managing them for the benefit of upland game birds and (2) expands hunter access opportunities on private lands.

Open Fields annual enrollment began in March 1, 2015 (FY 2015) and concluded June 30, 2018 (FY 2018). Using spatial analyses and the Montana cadastral, letters were sent to over 3,000 landowners annually who had CRP that was legally accessible and had a minimum of 2 years remaining on their federal CRP contract. In an effort to expand access into new areas, FWP emphasized enrollment of landowners who were new to FWP programs.

Landowners enrolled in Open Fields received \$5.00 per CRP acre for each year the CRP was enrolled in the federal program. The CRP enrollment cap for Open Fields started was a maximum of 160 acres per landowner. Landowners expressed interest in raising the cap to improve the overall incentive. FWP and NRCS amended the grant agreement in 2017 to allow up to 320 CRP acres per landowner.

In return for the Open Fields payment, landowners agreed to limit haying or grazing of the enrolled CRP acres to only once in 5 years. This maintenance frequency retains cover for longer periods of time over the span of the CRP contract and is more optimal for game birds and other wildlife, but still consistent with Farm Service Agency's rules. The landowner also agreed to allow walk-in game bird hunting with no further permission required. Over the course of the grant period, most landowners voluntarily added additional acres open to game bird hunting to help square up access boundaries or to make their applications more competitive.

At the conclusion of the 4-year grant enrollment period, 140 landowners were enrolled in Open Fields (Table 7). A total of 26,223 CRP acres were enrolled, and an additional 23,208 acres of access were provided by enrolled landowners. It total, 49,431 acres were open to free public game bird hunting access and FWP expended all funds from the VPA HIP grant.

Landowner response to MFWP's letters resulted in more interest than what could be accommodated through the VPA HIP grant. Once the grant funds were expended, the UGBEP solely funded 19 additional Open Fields contracts after July 1, 2018, amounting to over 4,600

CRP acres enrolled plus an additional 2,937 access acres donated by landowners, totaling 7,578 acres open to game bird hunting, costing an additional \$143,130 in UGBEP funds.

All enrolled lands were posted with program signs (updated in 2018) to identify the area open to walk-in game bird hunting (Figure 3). The annual UGBEP Projects Access Guide includes access boundaries of lands enrolled in Open Fields. Hunter response to Open Fields has been favorable (Figure 4).

Table 7. Summary of landowner enrollment in VPA HIP Open Fields between FY 2014 and FY 2018.

Year	# Landowners	#CRP Acres Habitat Site	# Access Acres Donated	Total Access Acres (CRP + Donated Acres)	Contract Length (Average)
2015	39	5,497	6,670	12,167	8
2016	28	4,163	6,825	10,988	8
2017	52	11,945	6,510	18,455	7
2018	21	4,618	3,203	7,821	7
Total	140	26,223	23,208	49,431	8



Figure 3. Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters program sign.



Photo credit: Pheasants Forever

Figure 4. Pheasant Forever members enjoy a great hunt on an Open Fields project site.

Cooperative Conservation Positions

The UGBEP has entered into cooperative agreements with Habitat Forever for cooperative conservation positions in Denton, Billings, and Ninepipe areas. In April 2013, the department awarded Habitat Forever with 2 personal services contracts to continue these habitat enhancement activities in the Denton and Billings areas. Both contracts were scheduled to terminate on December 31, 2017 but were eligible for renewals through June 30, 2019 because of unspent contract balances. During FY 2017 Ben Hoesl was hired as the Habitat Specialist in the Lake County area. The contract for this position terminates on August 31, 2019.

The primary purpose of these three partnership positions is to conduct intensive habitat enhancements and maintenance activities to improve habitat for game birds and other wildlife on lands that are accessible to public hunting. The outcome of these activities not only provides productive habitat for upland game birds but also provides quality opportunities for upland game bird hunters in areas where public hunting access can be limited.

Habitat enhancement and maintenance accomplishments during the past biennium are described below for each of these 3 contracts. Weed management makes up well over half of the effort to establish and maintain these habitat project areas.

REGION 1 LAKE COUNTY-BASED FARMING (FWP/USFWS/HF/PF PARTNERSHIP)

The partner-supported Habitat Specialist position focuses primarily on renovating upland habitats on USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) and on FWP Ninepipe WMA, all in the Mission Valley. These areas are popular hunting destinations, known for their beauty and highly productive waterfowl and pheasant habitats (Figure 5). The WMA offers approximately 4,000 acres of hunting access and WPAs span nearly 4,000 acres.

At the end of FY 2017, Charlie Hoesl, Habitat Forever Specialist, resigned from his position. On December 6, 2018, Ben Hoesl filled the vacancy as the new Habitat Forever Specialist. During FY 2017, approximately 677 acres of winter food, nesting cover, and winter cover were established and maintained. The program expended \$23,254 in FY 2017. During FY 2018, approximately 574 acres of upland and waterfowl habitats were established or maintained with total program expenditures of \$24,983. Habitat work was conducted on approximately 15 units (project sites) during the biennium.

Table 8 highlights accomplishments during the biennium on FWP Ninepipe WMA and US Fish Wildlife Service Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA).



Figure 5. A hunter reported difficulty keeping track of his dogs in this Triticale food plot but bagged a rooster nonetheless. (Sandsmark WPA, Lake County)

Table 8. Selection of habitat enhancement and maintenance activities: Lake County.

Project Site and Goal(s)	FY 2017 Efforts	FY 2018 Efforts
FWP Ninepipe WMA: Short-Eared Unit <i>The primary goal is to reduce reed canary grass throughout wetlands and to promote growth of native wetland species to increase nesting success in surrounding uplands.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spot-spray reed canary grass • Plant ~1,000 wetland plants along shore • Seed 11 acres native vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued herbicide application and mowing to manage Chamomile infestation.
FWP Ninepipe WMA: Post Creek Unit <i>Eliminate invasive species, especially whitetop, teasel, and Canada thistle to promote diverse perennial cover. Use a cover / food plot rotation followed by herbicide treatments for 1 or 2 seasons then seed to perennial cover.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spot-sprayed reed canary grass in April. • Seeded 3-acre cover crop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued herbicide application and mowing to manage weeds. • Planted 20 <i>Rosa woodsii</i> to enhance nesting and escape cover.

Project Site and Goal(s)--continued	FY 2017 Efforts	FY 2018 Efforts
USFWS Sandmark WPA <i>Eliminate or greatly reduce perennial weeds. Establish a perennial vegetative composition.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 acres of spring wheat and barley food plots • 4 acres of forb / grass strips • Spot spray 1 acre of tall wheatgrass • Weed management: 10 acres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued to eliminate weeds by spraying and mowing. • Determined there is a need for another year of small grain cover crop / herbicide treatment in 2019 before nesting cover seeding attempt.
USFWS Crow WPA <i>Establish diverse perennial habitat with focus on integrating desirable forbs into landscape. Monitor and herbicide treat until weed presence is low enough for perennial seeding attempt.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48 acres winter cover: basin wild rye and tall wheat grass • 56 acres smooth brome eradication • Weed management: nest cover site near ponds (3 acres), whitetop and Canada thistle (10 acres), whitetop (53 acres) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treated with glyphosate and seeded to perennial nesting cover (15 acres). • Ongoing monitoring for weeds and treatment if needed. • Prepped 5 acres for future grain planting.
USFWS Duck Haven WPA <i>Establish a diverse mix of grass and forbs that will self-perpetuate perennially. Eliminate or greatly reduce whitetop in project site.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weed management: 6 acres • Seeded 1 acre to forb mix. • Planted more than 2,000 shrubs to enhance habitat connectivity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued site prep by herbicide application and mowing (26 acres). Approximately 11 acres will be seeded to nesting cover.

REGION 4 DENTON-BASED FARMING (FWP/HF/PF PARTNERSHIP)

This partnership primarily focuses on five properties: PF Coffee Creek (800 acres deeded); PF Wolf Creek (1,000 acres deeded); DNRC Wolf Creek (2,500 acres); DNRC Coffee Creek (640 acres) and the Beckman WMA (6,568 acres), totaling over 11,500 acres of habitat and hunting opportunity. The following projects have been developed and subsequently maintained by the Central Montana Chapter of Pheasants Forever (CMCPF) and the Habitat Forever Habitat Specialist.

Throughout the biennium, habitat work comprised mostly of maintenance of existing enhancement projects (Table 9). Ongoing maintenance efforts include mechanical tillage, in-

row hand weeding, control of currant worms in the golden currant and tent caterpillars in the chokecherries, spraying and cultivating field bindweed infestations, and food plots.

In FY 2018, Jake Doggett, Region 4 Upland Game Bird Habitat Specialist, developed a 13-year habitat enhancement and management plan for site-specific food plots (30 acres) and nesting cover (11 acres) on the Beckman WMA. Food plots will consist of sorghum-sudangrass, millet, spring wheat, and yellow sweetclover. The nesting cover will include a robust mix of native grasses and forbs. Virg Gluth, the HF Habitat Specialist, will conduct the site preps, seeding, and weed management.

In FY 2017 and 2018, the UGBEP contributed \$54,907 and \$51,560, respectively, towards the projects established and maintained during the biennium.



Photo credit: Craig Roberts

Figure 6. Mature winter cover with adjacent food sources are effective enhancements to help pheasants get through tough winters and cold wet springs. Pictured here is Seaberry (*Hippophae* spp), which provides security cover and food source for upland game birds and other wildlife (PF Coffee Creek).

Table 9. Summary of habitat enhancement and maintenance activities: Denton.

Project Sites	FY2017		FY2018	
<i>Beckman WMA Projects</i>	<i>Total Project Sites</i>	<i>Total Habitat Acres</i>	<i>Total Project Sites</i>	<i>Total Habitat Acres</i>
Food Plot	9	23.4	9	23.4
Nesting Cover & Food Plot Renovation	1	10	1	10
Shelterbelt	5	16	5	16
Silver Sage Travel Corridors	9	4	9	4 (5 miles double rows)
Silver Sage - interseeding perm cover between rows	9	4	9	4
Sub-total	33	57.4	33	57.4
	FY2017		FY2018	
<i>DNRC Wolf Creek Projects</i>	<i>Total Project Sites</i>	<i>Total Habitat Acres</i>	<i>Total Project Sites</i>	<i>Total Habitat Acres</i>
Food Plots	2	2	2	2
Shelterbelt	1	4	1	4
Sub-total	3	6	3	6
	FY2017		FY2018	
<i>PF Wolf Creek Projects</i>	<i>Total Project Sites</i>	<i>Total Habitat Acres</i>	<i>Total Project Sites</i>	<i>Total Habitat Acres</i>
Food Plot	4	5	4	5
Nesting Cover	1	27	1	27
Shelterbelt	2	7	2	7
Silver Sage Travel Corridors	6	4 (3 miles double rows)	6	4 (3 miles double rows)
Sub-total	13	43	13	43
	FY2017		FY2018	
<i>PF Coffee Creek Projects</i>	<i>Total Project Sites</i>	<i>Total Habitat Acres</i>	<i>Total Project Sites</i>	<i>Total Habitat Acres</i>
Brood Cover	1	1	1	1
Food Plot	10	36	10	36
Nesting Cover (DNC)	4	300	3	4

Shelterbelts	4	34	4	34
Sub-total	19	371	18	75
	FY2016		FY2018	
<i>DNRC Coffee Creek Project</i>	<i>Total Project Sites</i>	<i>Total Habitat Acres</i>	<i>Total Project Sites</i>	<i>Total Habitat Acres</i>
Food Plot	2	7	2	7
Nesting Cover (DNRC)	1	1	1	1
Sub-total	3	8	3	8
Grand Total	FY2015		FY2016	
	Total Project Sites	Total Habitat Acres	Total Project Sites	Total Habitat Acres
	71	485	70	189

REGION 5 BILLINGS-BASED FARMING (FWP/HF/BLM PARTNERSHIP)

Now in its tenth year, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and FWP partnership continues to support the Billings Habitat Forever farming position. Steve Rockhold, Habitat Forever, began his duties as the new Habitat Specialist in the latter half of FY 2018. The first priorities were planning for the upcoming field season, including maintenance and repair of irrigation pumps, vehicles, and farming implements.

Habitat work is intended to restore and enhance pheasant and other upland game bird habitats on public lands open to hunting along the Yellowstone River and its major tributaries in Yellowstone, Treasure, Stillwater, Carbon, Bighorn, and Sweetgrass counties. Habitat enhancement and maintenance efforts are focused on the BLM-administered Pompeys Pillar National Monument, FWP Yellowstone Wildlife Management Area, FWP Voyager's Rest Fishing Access Site, and FWP Clarks Fork Fishing Access Site (Table 10).

Additional supporting partners include the Yellowstone Valley Chapter of Pheasants Forever, Billings Rod & Gun Club, Montana Chapter of Safari Club, and Conoco Phillips.

Habitat enhancements included irrigated food plots, dry land food plots, irrigated nesting cover, dry land nesting cover, irrigated brood plots, wetland development, riparian vegetation restoration, and shelterbelt/winter cover plantings and maintenance (Figure 7). Where available, flood and sprinkler irrigation are used to productive habitat enhancement results.

In FY 2017, the UGBEP contributed \$54,907 to enhance and maintain over 718 project acres. In FY 2018, the UGBEP contributed \$38,171 to enhance and maintain over 715 project acres. These project areas provide a combined total of 4,870 acres of public access for upland game bird hunting.

Table 10. Highlights of Habitat Forever enhancement and maintenance activities: Billings.

	FY 2017	FY2018
BLM Pompeys Pillar Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A crowing lane was mowed through a 20-acre nesting cover site. • New trees/shrubs were planted to augment the existing shelterbelt. • A 5-acre site was disked and seeded to dense nesting cover. • A 7-acre nesting cover site was flood irrigated and a crowing land was mowed. • A brood strip was maintained. • A 19-acre irrigated nesting cover site was put into a soybean cover crop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final site prep and seeding of 60 acres of food plots. • Mowed 75 acres of crowing lanes. • Shelterbelt weed monitoring and maintenance. • 30 acres of new dense nesting cover monitored and treated for weeds. • Spraying for noxious weed control throughout project sites.
	FY2017	FY2018
FWP Yellowstone Wildlife Management Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrigated nesting cover (14.5 acres) managed for weeds and irrigated as conditions allowed. A crowing land was mowed followed by interseeding with legumes and forbs. • An irrigated food plot comprised of corn (8 acres) was established. • 5 acres of irrigated nesting cover was treated for Canada thistle and a crowing lane was added. Smartweed and Marshelder were planted. • Grit stations were established. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established 24 acres of food plots. • Mowed 75 acres of crowing lanes. • Shelterbelt weed monitoring and maintenance. • 14 acres of new dense nesting cover monitored and treated for weeds. • Noxious weed control.

FWP Voyagers Rest Fishing Access Site Projects	FY2017	FY2018
	A 3.5-acre food plot site was prepped and seeded with soybeans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivated, planted, and irrigated 4-acre food plot. • Spraying to control noxious weeds, primarily Canada thistle.
FWP Clark's Fork FAS	FY2017	FY2018
	Management of 13-acre dryland nesting cover.	



Figure 7. Sorghum provides excellent winter cover and food for pheasants and other wildlife (Yellowstone WMA).

WESTERN FORESTS COOPERATIVE BIOLOGIST

Stationed in Missoula, Dave Nikonow is the National Wild Turkey Federation Cooperative Biologist. In its third year, this work is funded through the U.S. Forest Service and FWP. The partnership's primary focus is to promote, design, and implement management activities that enhance wildlife habitats and promote healthy forest ecosystems in the Bitterroot National Forest and surrounding western Montana National Forest complexes that benefit wild turkey and forest grouse populations.

During FY 2017, Dave worked on 7 projects in various stages of completion, ranging from pre-planning and writing of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents to implementation. Below are his accomplishments for the fiscal year.

- Murphy Creek – A Final Decision was made in 2017 to treat 120 acres by commercially thinning and prescribed burning to promote maturation of ponderosa pine. These treatments will occur in 2018 and will provide winter wild turkey forage during years of good seed crop.
- Swamp Eddy – the Sheep Gap fire (part of the Hwy 200 Complex) began to burn in the project area. In the days following the lightning caused ignition, nearly 25,000 acres were burned and roughly 75% of those acres were within the designated project boundary. The district will be exploring salvage opportunities in this area with Dave's input on design treatments that benefit forest grouse and wild turkeys.
- Redd Bull – This large (~12,000 acre) vegetation treatment on the Superior Ranger District of the Lolo National Forest will treat a variety of habitat types including, but not limited to, riparian, aspen, dry ponderosa, north facing larch, and whitebark pine.
- South Fork of Fish Creek Ecosystem Maintenance Burn (EMB) – ongoing monitoring. No acres were treated this spring due to limited burn windows and the prioritization of treating Petty Creek EMB and Frenchtown Face EMB burn units during those isolated burn windows.
- Frenchtown Face EMB – The Frenchtown Face Ecosystem Restoration Project (~700 acres) is an ongoing project on the Ninemile Ranger District of the Lolo National Forest. It is intended to restore ponderosa pine and improve the health of this forest ecosystem while reducing the threat of uncontained fire in the Wildland Urban Interface. The prescribed fire treatments will open the canopy improving forb, grass, and shrub growth. This should increase insect density, which is important forage for wild turkeys and forest grouse during brood rearing.
- Petty Creek EMB - This Ecosystem Maintenance Burning project on the Ninemile Ranger District of the Lolo National Forest will mechanically remove conifers and prescribe burn areas suffering from conifer encroachment. Additionally, units may be treated for noxious weeds to limit their spread and enhance the forage quality. This area is critical habitat for bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer and wild turkeys. Dusky grouse will also benefit from treatments as shrub and grass development will increase along treated forest edges. Wild turkey brood rearing habitat will also improve with the increased growth of shrub and grass communities that support healthy insect populations. At the end of 2017, Dave reports that the district completed hand thinning in units Ed's Creek (153 acres), Gus Creek (263 acres) and French Gulch (263 acres). These 576 total acres of thinning have been prepared for prescribed fire once the slashed fuels cure.
- Beaver Soup – contributed to project design. Project will hand thin at variable spacing approximately 317 acres with the goal of restoring the ponderosa pine community to enhance wild turkey habitats.

Dave also played a critical role in USFS project and program development to ensure quality design and the timely completion of habitat work by leading FS teams through program development. Programs include:

- Development of the Bitterroot Forest Aspen Programmatic Categorical Exclusion
- Development of the Lolo Forest Aspen Programmatic Categorical Exclusion
- Development of the initial design of the Burdette Creek Habitat Restoration Project

In FY 2018 (through June 30, 2018), Dave acknowledged that the 2017 wildfire season provided delays and setbacks to several projects listed for treatments in 2017. On the other hand, the first half of 2018 provided opportunities for planned treatments. Habitat projects implemented or completed this spring included:

- Murphy Creek Commercial Timber Treatment (120 acres completed)
- Larry Creek Acquisition (120 acres completed)
- Frenchtown Face (490 additional acres completed in 2018)
- South Fork of Fish Creek (245 additional acres completed in 2018)
- Petty Creek (1,117 additional acres treated in 2018)
- Helena – Lewis & Clark Aspen (0 acres treated in 2018)
- Beaver Soup (0 additional acres treated since winter)

The UGBEP contributed \$24,930 and \$24,287 for FY 2017 and FY 2018, respectively.

Upland Game Bird Release Program

PEN-REARED PHEASANT RELEASES

The purpose of releasing pen-reared pheasants, as identified in statute (87-1-246 through 87-1-248, MCA), is to establish or enhance pheasant populations in suitable habitats that have combinations of permanent winter cover, idle cover (e.g., CRP), and cultivated grain. Each release consists of up to 40% cocks (12.9.602(1)(b), ARM), and all releases take place between August 1 through September 15.

Cooperators are eligible to participate in the pen-reared pheasant releasing program for up to 5 consecutive years (12.9.602(1)(r), ARM). An additional 5-year release period may be possible if habitat improvements are established that address factors limiting pheasant numbers.

For FY 2017, the program paid for the release of 11,841 pen-reared pheasants and expended \$115,704. During FY 2018, the program expended \$45,922 for the release of 5,000 pen-reared pheasants (Table 11).

Table 11. Summary of pheasant release contracts awarded.

Region	FY 2017			FY 2018		
	# Contracts	# Pheasants	Access (ac)	# Contracts	# Pheasants	# Access (ac)
4	3	250	3,534	0	0	0
6	30	4,916	42,400	39	5,000	53,764
7	29	6,675	119,152	0	0	0
Total	62	11,841	165,086	39	5,000	53,764

WILD TURKEY TRANSPLANTS

No wild turkey transplants occurred during the past biennium.

SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING

The option of supplemental feeding for game birds is restricted to a 3-county area in northeast Montana (12.9.615(1), ARM). Monitoring of winter conditions on established routes was conducted from January through March during 2016 and 2017. Winter conditions were average, indicating feeding criteria were not met. Supplemental feeding did not occur in Region 6 during the biennium.

UGBEP Projects Access Guide

The annual Access Guide summarizes for hunters where hunting opportunities have been established through the program and what enhancements each identified project entails. The guide is, in effect, the representation of current program accomplishments that are available for use by public upland game bird hunters, in fulfillment of the program's goal and in accordance with 87-1-246 through 87-1-249, MCA (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Published annually, the Projects Access Guide provides hunters with information such as project location, project type, and method used to obtain landowner's permission to hunt.

Within the guide, private lands projects include geospatially represented access boundaries that are color-coded to indicate whether the access area is open to: (1) walk-in game bird hunting with no further permission needed from the landowner (brown polygons), (2) landowner permission needed prior to hunting game birds (black polygons), or (3) private land projects enrolled in the Block Management Program (green circles). Public land projects are represented by triangular points. In addition to printed guides, each map is downloadable as a

Public Land Project - No Permission Needed

Project Located on Block Management Area (BMA) - See BMA Guide

Private Land Project - Walk-in Game Bird Hunting: No Further Permission Needed

Private Land Project - Permission Needed

US Bureau of Land Management

Other Federal Land

MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Montana State Trust Land

Indian Reservation

UGBEP Map Index: O1

Area of Interest

Valid for the 2017 Hunting Season. Possession of this map does not constitute legal access to private lands enrolled in the UGBEP. Check FWP Hunt Planner for updates: <http://bit.ly/2rqa9JM>

Map Scale 1:270,000

0 1 2 4 Miles

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

FWP Wildlife Administrative Regions

Map Page 5

MONTANA UPLAND GAME BIRD ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Each year the UGBEP Access Guide is distributed to all FWP regions by late August. Hunters may also request a guide be mailed to them. The program printed 6,100 guides in FY 2017 at a cost of \$8,058 (\$1.32 per guide), which also included freight and initial mailings for online requests. In FY 2018, the program printed 7,000 guides for a total expense of \$10,349 (\$1.48 per guide), including freight and initial mailings. Table 12 provides an overview of the number of guides requested and distributed to hunters.

Table 12. Total number of guides requested by year through the program's web page (HQ).

Fiscal Year	Total Guide Requests
2018	1,395
2017	1,817
2016	1,968
2015	1,856
2014	631
2013	464
2012	459
2011	249
2010	212
2009	757

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND ONGOING ADAPTATION

The UGBEP receives evaluation or feedback in a number of ways, which helps the program adapt to changing circumstances, improving performance. These include: (1) project monitoring, (2) ongoing assessment of needs, (3) input from the Council, and (4) hunter and cooperator feedback.

Contract/Project Monitoring

FWP Habitat Specialists and biologists conduct monitoring of all annual contracts, including Open Fields, Habitat Management Leases, grazing systems, and food plots. Project types such as nesting cover, shelterbelts, and sagebrush leases are monitored on a set schedule rather than every year. Unscheduled monitoring also occurs whenever staff stop by a project or to “check in” with the cooperator to collect receipts for reimbursements or to note progress of a project that is underway. Generally, well over 200 projects are monitored in a given year.

UGBEP Citizens' Advisory Council

The council and department staff met four times in this past biennium to review work planning and progress, receive public input, and to make program recommendations. Since 2009, the

Council's input has consistently served to improve program performance. The department appreciates the Council's dedication and support for the program.

The following items highlight the council's recommendations over the past biennium:

- Continue review of the 5-year pen-reared pheasant release cap (ARM 12-9-602(1)(r).
- Continue review of the new program option: Habitat Management Leases.
- The Council and department discussed at length how the spending cap could be further clarified to address conservation easements, expired contracts, concurrent contracts, or new landownerships. The council made recommendations that FWP and the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted through revisions in the program strategic plan.
- Council will to continue reviewing 5-year revenue / expenditures / obligations spreadsheets.
- Suggested statutory changes:
 - Change pheasant release expenditure to a maximum of 15% of annual program revenue (87-1-247(2)(a), MCA).
 - Eliminate mandated minimum required expenditure (87-1-247(2)(b), MCA).
 - Unspent pheasant release funds would be made available for use on the habitat enhancement side of the program.
 - Revise requirement of council membership (87-1-251 (1)(f), MCA) to one legislator from each major party represented.
- When current contracts expire, seek continued funding of partner positions (Habitat Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation) through the state procurement process.
- UGBEP to provide up to \$125,000 for new Open Fields enrollments in 2019.

UGBEP Hunter Survey

The UGBEP invites hunters, via an on-line survey, to provide comments about their experiences with the program during the hunting season. The survey link is published in the UGBEP Projects Access Guide and on the program web page. During the biennium, 51 respondents provided comments on the UGBEP. The following is a sampling of comments:

"I really appreciate FWP efforts to assist upland game birds. Fully support the programs. Too bad CRP acres are disappearing. Hopefully USDA policy will change, and we will see a return of CRP."

"Fine job is being done providing maps and signage. Welcome addition to bird hunting habitat and access, thank you."

"I think the UGBEP is a great project for our state -- for both landowners and users alike. However, I would like to see a study done on the impact that these pinpointed areas of public access have on wild bird populations -- especially when our enforcement is spread so thin and the potential increased use of social media to "hotspot" certain areas exists."

"The UGBEP guide is well done and useful. I have been using it since 2015 and can't suggest any changes. I order my BMA and UGBEP guides early online. They can be hard to come by once the seasons start. Well done MFWP."

"The landowners can be a bit hard to reach to get permission, but when you get a hold of them they were great to talk with. "

"I have yet been able to hunt a site where pheasants have been released due to landowners either not being available or having out of state family hunting the property. I am not convinced that releasing pheasants is money well spent. Nesting and winter habitat seems to be the limiting factor in general."

Open Fields Hunter Survey

The program also sought input from hunters who specifically hunted on lands enrolled in Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters. During the biennium, 31 hunters participated in the survey reporting that they hunted on Open Fields enrollments. The following is a sampling of comments received:

"The open fields program is a great resource for all upland hunters. I would urge the state to put more effort into stocking birds to help boost the population after the past two winters."

"Very grateful to landowners enrolled in this program. Some lands were overgrazed or over cut or lacked cover late into season when needed most to hold birds."

"The program is great! Keep it going and let me know how I can support it. My son and I take advantage of the program as much as possible. J. Smith."

"Absolutely love the program. We hunt Eastern Montana every season and have for the last 8-10 years. The open field for game bird hunters has been a very nice addition to the BMA program. Some of the better producing fields have been in the open fields program. Thank you very much for starting the program and I hope that it continues for many years to come."

“Habitat quality needs to be improved. Cover was good to excellent on most properties, but food for game birds was very limited or non-existent. Need to add food plots.”

FY 2019 PROGRAM EMPHASIS

In addition to continued implementation of all aspects of the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program described above, the following program objectives scheduled during FY 2019 are described below.

Program Revenue and Expenditures

Beginning in FY 2016, program expenditures nearly doubled since FY 2015. In this past biennium, program expenditures have largely exceeded annual revenue, lowering the unspent balance. Based on current accomplishments and related program expenditures and as the program’s unspent balance declines, the program will need to adjust its project selection process to assure expenditures are in line with the program’s fund balance and incoming revenue. Program staff will work on developing additional procedures that ensures the program will remain effective, strategic, and sustainable in the years to come. Once drafted, the department will seek input from the 12-member Council.

Program Adjustments

FWP recommended program adjustments to further enhance wildlife habitat and to encourage landowner enrollment. The Council and FWP concurred with adopting the following program improvements.

- Biennial Food Plots: Geared to establish food plots and leave idle in year 2 for brood cover.
- Habitat Management Leases: Increase payment structure by \$5 per cover type: Light Cover is now \$15/acre, Security Cover is now \$25 per acre, and Winter cover is now \$30 per acre.
- Active CRP may be enrolled as a \$5/acre cover type through a Habitat Management Lease to open opportunity to private landowners already enrolled in UGBEP and Block Management. This change is also available on DNRC State Lands.

Wildlife Friendly Practices (Pilot)

FWP discussed with the council a list of practices for testing as a pilot to determine their viability. Cooperators would be eligible to receive an incentive payment for conducting these practices. Through this pilot, FWP will evaluate efficacy and landowner interest and will report back to the Council for further discussion and to determine whether any of these practices are worthy of adoption as operational program practices.

- Grain Stubble Management Practice: Leave at least 14" tall grain stubble for added security cover.
- Cover Crops Incentive Practice: Establish a cover crop instead of chemical fallow.
- Wildlife-Friendly Haying Practice: Annual haying rotation, delayed harvest and wildlife-friendly haying patterns
- Disking Practice: Disturb seeded perennial grass cover to stimulate early successional habitat conditions.
- Interseeding Forbs and Legumes Practice: Maintain plant diversity in established grass stands.

Cooperative Farming Contracts

The 2 personal service contracts with Habitat Forever in Denton (Region 4) and Billings (Region 5) will expire July 1, 2019. It is FWP's intent to review these work arrangements with the funding partners in consideration of developing new contracts and following associated procurement processes.

Western Forest Management Contract

The personal services contract for the National Wild Turkey Federation cooperative biologist's is set to expire July 1, 2019. Similar to the Cooperative Farming contracts above, FWP and the US Forest Service will collaborate to confirm ongoing support of this work effort.

APPENDIX A: MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS UPLAND BIRD 10-YEAR LICENSE

SALES

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE, & PARKS UPLAND BIRD 10-YEAR LICENSE SALES

LICENSE TYPE	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Res. Bird	29,397	28,672	27,644	25,466	26,011	26,820	26,417	28,105	24,131	21,259
Res. Senior/Youth/Disabled Bird	1,525	1,428	1,294	1,209	1,304	1,299	1,289	1,533	12,733	11,658
Res. Sportsman (w/o bear)	20,315	19,635	18,812	19,782	18,706	19,126	19,330	18,945	23,199	23,892
Res. Sportsman (w/bear)	13,417	12,822	12,234	12,508	14,872	15,977	16,536	16,422	17,931	19,081
Res. Youth Sportsman	2,941	5,673	5,761	6,168	6,219	6,305	6,426	6,232	6,964	6,200
Res. Senior Sportsman	69	1,037	1,058	1,191	1,298	1,548	1,842	1,926	11,523	12,366
Military Recognition Sportsman	1,040	1,141	1,155	1,311	1,298	904	856	740	555	428
Cooperators Sportsman	1,024	1,032	1,049	1,044	665	629	614	607	631	622
Res. Free Youth Sportsman	4,941	5,018	5,439	5,051	4,976	5,194	4,872	4,661	1	
Total Resident Upland Bird Season	74,669	76,458	74,446	73,730	75,349	77,802	78,182	79,171	97,668	95,506
Res. Turkey	26,267	25,519	24,995	22,759	24,188	25,071	24,656	27,169	25,526	25,990
NR Bird	7,555	6,795	6,633	5,568	6,373	5,144	5,215	5,590	5,419	4,318
NR Bird - Youth		114	101	99	126	161	186	211	188	137
NR Big Game Combo-General	10,645	10,971	11,560	14,145	12,197	12,362	12,570	12,376	12,303	11,657
NR Big Game Combo-Outfit.	4,696	3,928	3,317							
NR Big Game Combo-Family Sponsor			269	125	46	20	12	10	183	263
NR Deer Combo-General	3,515	3,435	4,001	6,628	8,491	9,777	9,776	10,158	10,316	10,653
NR Deer Combo-Outfitter	2,242	1,765	1,971							
NR Deer Combo-Landowner	1,989	1,992	2,000	1,790	1,470	1,284	971	960	893	884
NR Deer Combo-Family Sponsor			212	112	41	20	15	12	98	128
NR Elk Combo-General	781	784	742	1,791	2,482	2,529	2,756	4,316	4,641	4,800
NR Elk Combo-Outfitter	487	429	837							
NR Deer Combo-LO Reissued	82	86	64							
NR Deer Combo-General Reiss										
NR Youth Sponsored Big Game Combo	195	299	298	296	388	511	548	592	628	594
NR College Student Big Game Combo		253	353	356	393	409	463	477	115	106
NR Cooperators Big Game Combo	73	115	120	118	127	123	129	136	147	147
NR Native Upland Game Bird					416	595	653	683	73	60
NR Native Big Game Combo									931	887
NR Native Deer Combo									379	384
Total Nonresident Upland Bird Season	32,260	30,966	32,478	31,028	32,550	32,935	33,294	35,521	36,314	35,018
Nonres. 3-Day Bird Stamp-Shooting Prese	729	761	662	568	526	507	479	521	505	473
Nonres. 3-Day Bird Stamp						1,911	1,989	2,432	2,539	2,200
Nonres. Turkey	1,540	1,331	1,184	982	1,005	993	925	980	946	1,152